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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT OF EMPLOYEES IN THE METAL SECTOR

ABSTRACT

It is an increasing challenge to find loyal employees and keep them in the company due to various challenges in the labor market. The metal sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina plays one of the key roles in the development of the economy. Physical demands of the job, safety at work, lack of qualified labor are some of the challenges in this sector. It is important to determine what motivates employees in this sector to remain part of the company and not decide to change jobs.

In this research, the primary goal is to determine the commitment of employees to the company in the metal sector. Employee commitment will be observed through three basic elements: affective, continuation and normative commitment. As part of the primary research, a survey questionnaire was used as a data collection form, the research was conducted on a random sample composed of medium and large enterprises that are spatially dispersed on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and operate within the metal sector. In the analysis of the results, non-parametric statistical methods were used to examine differences and relationships between variables in the sample. The results show a moderate level of organizational commitment, with the most pronounced affective component, indicating a stronger emotional attachment of employees to the organization, with no significant differences in the level of commitment by gender.

Keywords: *employee commitment, metal sector.*

JEL: M10, M29

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational commitment is a relatively new concept in the field of human resources and there is no single definition, or the author's position. Mowday et al. (1974) define organizational commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with the organization and his involvement in its work. Wiener (1982) believes that organizational commitment represents the totality of normative pressure on an individual to behave in accordance with the goals and interests of the organization. According to O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), organizational commitment implies a psychological connection that an individual feels towards the organization, which reflects his degree of acceptance of the organization.

Becker (1960) is one of the first authors who tried to clarify the comprehensive concept of organizational commitment from the perspective of the individual's relationship with the organization. He defined organizational commitment as the "side-bet" theory. According to Becker's theory, the relationship between the employee and the organization is based on a contract on the behavior of economic exchange, committed employees are committed because they have completely hidden or somewhat hidden investments, "side-bet", which they made by staying in the given organization. Mowday et al. (1982) describe exchange theory as the main explanation of the commitment process in which commitment has developed as an alternative construct for job satisfaction, and the authors argue that commitment can sometimes be a better predictor of turnover than job satisfaction. Meyer and Allen (1991), whose work is supported by Camilleri (2006), believe that the feeling of commitment among employees appears for several reasons - because they want it, because they need it, and because they think it is right. They also point out that it is a psychological state that binds the individual to the organization.

A few generations ago, many employees around the world assumed that they would spend their entire career working for one organization. The assumption was that they would trade lifelong loyalty and good work for

lifelong job security. That perception changed in the 1980s and 1990s when downsizing became a more common part of working life, largely due to technological advances. Downsizing is a form of involuntary turnover, when employees are forced to leave the organization regardless of their previous level of commitment, which is a consequence of technological development. One study found that downsizing survivors actually experienced more job-related stress than downsizing survivors who continued to look for a new job (Devine et al., 2003).

Employees are the key asset of the organization, which provides the organization with the opportunity to progress and develop in order to be more productive, and when the employees of the organization have an optimal performance. Organizational commitment is a determining factor in how employees are actively involved in performing every activity of the organization. Ramdani et al. (2019) believes that organizations with significant individualistic differences in employees, including motivation to do well, will be directed towards appropriate organizational goals, which will lead to effective work productivity. A large number of employees in Bosnia and Herzegovina work precisely in the metal sector, and it is very important to determine the commitment of employees in this sector. Due to the search for better living conditions, a large number of employees decide to leave Bosnia and Herzegovina and look for work in other countries, both operational workers and managers and engineers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of organizational commitment are different, but common to all of them is some form of connection between employees and the organization based on some identified values that are valuable to them. Qualified and talented employees are not the only criterion that is important for all companies today. It is much more important to retain such employees and achieve their loyalty. Dedicated employees provide the company with loyal customers, which brings the company higher profits and a better market position in the long term. Organizations must create a work environment that will stimulate the creation of the sense of commitment needed by employees (Sánchez Cañizares & López-Guzmán Guzmán, 2010).

Meyer and Allen (1991) developed their model on the basis of previously developed models of organizational commitment, which were mostly unidimensional. Their research is considered significant because even today it represents the starting point of all serious discussions about the phenomenon of organizational commitment. These authors found that there are three components of commitment: affective, continuation, and normative commitment. The basic difference in these forms of organizational commitment refers to the reasons for potentially leaving or staying in the organization. No research on organizational commitment has been as widely accepted as that of Meyer and Allen (1991), who developed a three-dimensional model. More recent research (Sumi, 2011) is also based on the three elements of organizational commitment established by Meyer and Allen (1991), which shows that the three-dimensional concept of commitment is still the starting point in all research related to organizational commitment. According to some authors, the most relevant indicator of organizational commitment is affective commitment, which is associated with a state in which an individual is strongly associated with the organization (Kuvaas, 2006).

According to Meyer and Allen (1991), affective commitment can be defined as the desire for an employee to remain a member of an organization due to emotional attachment to that organization and involvement in it. Continuation commitment represents the desire for the employee to remain a member of the organization due to the awareness of the costs associated with leaving, that is, he stays because he has to, because he is forced to pay living expenses, due to potential current indebtedness or the fact of supporting his family. While normative commitment implies the employee's desire to remain a member of the organization due to a sense of obligation, i.e. he stays because he should, he feels obliged to return to the organization everything that has been invested in him. These three types of organizational commitment combine to create an overall sense of psychological attachment to the company. Some employees may be highly rational and cautious in nature, focusing primarily on continuation commitment when assessing their overall desire to stay. Other employees may be more emotional and intuitive in nature, relying more on "feel" than on calculated cost-benefit evaluation. The importance of the three organizational commitments may also vary over the course of a career. It has been established (Laiho et al., 2022) that an attractive employee experience provides opportunities for value creation in various areas such as process improvement, new product development, decision making, brand communication, recruitment and training, but a practical employee participation program is needed in order for business processes and work experience to influence the emotional and social needs of employees.

There is a large number of studies in which various factors influencing organizational commitment have been observed. Some of these factors are leadership style and organizational climate (Saha, 2016), then demographic and situational factors (Sommer et al., 1996), demographic and psychosocial factors (Booth-Kewley et al., 2017), organizational culture (Aranki et al., 2019), national culture (Black, 1999) and many others. Organizational commitment of employees is considered an important factor that ultimately affects organizational success, not only individual success, but also intention to leave, organizational inertia and employee engagement (Guzeller & Celiker, 2020).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The goal of the research was to determine the extent to which employees in the metal sector are committed to the company, whether there is a difference in certain segments of commitment, and whether employee commitment differs by gender. Organizational commitment is best understood through the reasons why employees stay in or leave the organization, even when there are legitimate work benefits. Organizational commitment represents the employee's desire to remain a member of the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p. 224). Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional connection with the organization, which is reflected in friendships, a positive atmosphere, culture or job satisfaction. Continuation commitment is based on awareness of the costs of leaving the organization, such as loss of salary, benefits or advancement opportunities, while normative commitment stems from the employee's sense of moral obligation to remain in the organization out of loyalty to colleagues, superiors or the company as a whole. The question arises whether there is employee commitment in the metal sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and whether it differs by gender. Empirical research was carried out based on the collection of primary data through online research, where a survey questionnaire was used as a data collection form. The items of the scale were taken from an already validated measure and translated and culturally adapted for the context of the metal sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The respondents were employees of companies from the metal sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Data collection was carried out on the basis of a random sample. A sample of 128 respondents from medium and large metal processing companies, according to income classes, which represents approximately 14% of the total population of about 892 organizations, enables representativeness and reliable generalization of the results. Each employee presents his experience from the company he comes from. The survey was conducted in 2025 over a period of six months. Respondents rated the statements on a Likert scale. The statistical unit in this research was employees. The survey questionnaire was structured in the form of closed questions with an offered number of enumerations and closed questions, with an offered Likert-type intensity scale, but also in the form of open questions for the purpose of gathering additional information about phenomena. For each of the commitments, 8 statements were offered, about which the respondents declared according to the Likert scale in the range from 1 to 5 how much they agree with the statements. Through this work, the following hypotheses were tested:

H_1 There is a high commitment of employees in the metal sector.

H_2 There is a difference between individual components of employee commitment in the metal sector.

H_3 There is a difference between the commitment of employees in the metal sector by gender.

When analyzing the available domestic and foreign literature, methods of analysis and synthesis were used with the aim of identifying the characteristics, connections and cause-and-effect relationships between the elements of organizational commitment. In order to verify the accuracy of the set hypotheses, methods of proof and refutation were applied, while the method of description will serve to show the commitment of employees in the metal sector.

Analysis was performed using the Friedman, Wilcoxon and Mann–Whitney tests. After the defined research hypotheses, the results of the conducted research will be presented below. After the presentation of the research sample, answers to the research questions will be determined based on the tested research hypotheses.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

Analyzing a sample of 128 respondents, an effort was made to establish the commitment of employees in the metal sector, as well as whether there are differences in the commitment of employees by gender. A total of 65.6% of respondents were men, and 34.4% were women. The largest number of responses came from the Central B&H region 62.5%, then from the Northwestern B&H region 15.6%, then from the Herzegovina region 10.9%, and from Northeastern B&H 9.4%, while 1.6% of respondents were from the Sarajevo macroregion. In the paper, employee commitment is presented through three components, which will be presented below.

Table 1. Reliability of the Organizational Commitment Subscales (Cronbach's α)

Type of commitment	Number of items (question)	Cronbach α	Reliability description
affective commitment	8	0,916	excellent
continuation commitment	8	0,820	very good
normative commitment	8	0,839	very good

Source: Author's calculation, SPSS

The reliability of the organizational commitment subscales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The affective commitment subscale, consisting of 8 items, showed excellent internal consistency with $\alpha = 0.916$. The continuation commitment subscale (8 items) demonstrated very good reliability, with $\alpha = 0.820$, while the normative commitment subscale (8 items) also exhibited very good reliability, with $\alpha = 0.839$. Overall, these results indicate that all three subscales are sufficiently reliable for use in further statistical analyses.

First, a normality test was performed. The distribution normality test (Shapiro-Wilk) showed that affective ($p = .004$) and continuation commitment ($p = .034$) deviated from the normal distribution, while normative commitment ($p = .082$) did not deviate significantly. Since two of the three variables are not normally distributed, the non-parametric Friedman test was used for further analysis of differences between components.

Table 2. Normality test for commitment components

Type of commitment	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk			Mean Rank
	Stat.	DF	Sig.	Stat.	DF	Sig.	
affective commitment	0.081	128	0.04	0.968	128	0.004	2.37
continuation commitment	0.087	128	0.019	0.978	128	0.034	1.79
normative commitment	0.07	128	.200*	0.982	128	0.082	1.84

Source: Author's calculation, SPSS

Table 3. Friedman Test for commitment components

N	128
Chi-Square	27.817
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0

Source: Author's calculation, SPSS

The Friedman test showed significant differences between the components of employee commitment, $\chi^2(2) = 27.82$, $p < .001$. The analysis of average ranks shows that affective commitment is the most dominant (Mean Rank = 2.37), while continuation (Mean Rank = 1.79) and normative commitment (Mean Rank = 1.84) were significantly lower. Pairwise comparisons (Wilcoxon signed-rank test) confirmed that affective commitment is significantly different from both other components, while the difference between continuation and normative commitment was not statistically significant.

Table 4. Wilcoxon signed-rank test for pairwise comparison of commitment components

	continuous - affective		normative - affective		normative - continuous
Z	-4.410	Z	-5.329	Z	-.069
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.945

Source: Author's calculation, SPSS

A pairwise comparison using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed that affective commitment is significantly higher than continuation commitment, $Z = -4.410$, $p < .001$. The majority of respondents rated affective commitment higher, while a smaller number gave a higher rating to continuation commitment, and a very small number of respondents gave the same ratings for both components. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test for affective and normative commitment showed that affective commitment was significantly higher than normative, $Z = -5.329$, $p < .001$. The majority of respondents rated affective commitment higher, while a smaller number gave a higher rating to normative commitment, and a very small number of respondents gave the same ratings. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test for continuous and normative commitment showed that there was no significant difference between these components, $Z = -0.069$, $p = .945$. The number of respondents who gave a higher rating to continuation commitment was almost equal to the number of those who gave a higher rating to normative commitment, while a very small number of respondents rated both components equally.

Thus, affective commitment is the dominant component of employee commitment, while continuation and normative commitment do not differ significantly among respondents. Therefore, we can conclude that we confirm the second hypothesis that there is a difference between individual components of employee commitment in the metal sector. In the following, we performed a normality test before determining whether there are differences in the results by gender.

Table 5. Normality test for the distribution of commitment by gender

Gender	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Stat.	DF	Sig.	Stat.	DF	Sig.
Male	0.088	84	0.161	0.952	84	0.003
Female	0.101	44	0.2	0.95	44	0.057

Source: Author's calculation, SPSS

The distribution of commitment is not completely normal in both groups (by gender), so we used non-parametric tests for independent samples.

Table 6. Results of non-parametric tests for the comparison of commitment by gender

Mann-Whitney U	1830
Wilcoxon W	2820
Z	-0.09
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.928

Source: Author's calculation, SPSS

The Mann-Whitney test showed that there was no significant difference in overall commitment between men and women. The average ranks were almost the same for men and women, indicating that gender does not affect the level of employee commitment. Therefore, we can conclude that we reject the third hypothesis that there is a difference in employee commitment in the metal sector by gender.

Table 7. Employee commitment results in the metal sector

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
affective commitment	128	1	5	3.44531	0.945325
continuation commitment	128	1	5	3.04297	0.796529
normative commitment	128	1	5	3.04492	0.775285
Valid N (listwise)	128				

Source: Author's calculation, SPSS

On a scale from 1 to 5, respondents rated affective commitment on average with $M = 3.45$ ($SD = 0.95$), which indicates a moderate emotional attachment to the company. Continuation ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.80$) and normative commitment ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.78$) were close to the neutral value, which means that employees are not perceived to be strongly tied to the company either because of costs of leaving or because of a sense of obligation. Overall, the respondents showed a moderate level of commitment, with a more pronounced affective component. Therefore, we can conclude that we reject the first hypothesis that there is a high commitment of employees in the metal sector.

Based on the results of the research, we can recommend that managers pay more attention to the affective commitment of employees, because this is where the potential for employee retention lies. Employees in the metal sector confirmed the importance of employees' emotional attachment to the organization and colleagues they work with. Although the companies in the metal sector are mostly large, it is very important that the employees know the goal, the purpose of the business and that they get to know each other with other employees through socializing and activities in and outside of work.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that the main purpose of the work was achieved, that is, an answer was obtained to the question about the level of commitment of employees in the metal sector in Bosnian enterprises. The results show that the respondents show a moderate level of commitment, with the most pronounced component being affective commitment, which indicates a stronger emotional attachment of employees to the organization compared to other dimensions of commitment. This confirmed the existence of differences between individual components of commitment, with some appearing as more dominant and significant for understanding the overall commitment of employees.

These findings also have important practical implications. The strategy of human resources management in companies in the metal sector should be aimed at strengthening all dimensions of employee commitment. However, considering the already observed expressiveness of affective commitment, it is recommended to further nurture and strengthen this emotional bond, since it can represent a key comparative advantage in the process of retaining quality and competent personnel.

It is interesting that the research results did not show significant differences in the degree of commitment of employees according to gender. Contrary to the common assumption that certain sectors or activities are naturally more suited to one gender, the findings of this paper suggest that in the metal sector employee commitment is not gender-determined. Therefore, when designing motivational strategies and human resource management policies, it is not necessary to make a distinction between genders, as employees, regardless of gender, show a similar pattern of attachment and loyalty to the organization.

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